



**10th Meeting of the 2024-2025 Student Government Association Senate**  
**October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 | 7:00 PM | Livak Ballroom**

**Call to Order**

This meeting was called to order by Speaker Kennedy Connors.

**Roll Call**

Senators Forrest, Theroux, Quinn, Bibens, and Grace not present.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes approved unanimously.

**Public Forum**

**Old Business**

Resolution Calling UVM to Support Building Emissions Reduction Ordinance, sponsored by Senator Paquette, Senator Lynch, and Chair Surak

- Things I've changed: took out some clauses to make it more concise, took out a clause referring to the Sustainable Campus Fund, and added a clause at the end recommending that SGA recommends not using student tuition to pay for this.

**Chair Jones:** Could you scroll down to the second to last "Be It Resolved" clause? Where it says "UVM fully supports the Climate Action Collective and will show this support in person," I

feel iffy about language saying UVM SGA members are required to show up to protests, meetings, rallies, or events. We don't have a way to enforce that and it could look bad if we commit to that and can't do it. I also don't think there is a precedent for us doing that. Maybe it could change to "will encourage showing support in person."

**Senator Purple:** I agree, I don't think we have ever fully committed our body to having to protest for something in my time here. If you are willing, you could change from "will" to "will encourage." I am curious to hear what you think about that.

- **Response:** Maybe we could say "UVM SGA fully supports the Climate Action Collective's mission in passing BERO and encourages its members."

**Chair Jones:** Motion to amend the second to last "Be It Further Resolved" clause to say: "UVM SGA fully supports the Climate Action Collective's mission and will encourage Senators and the Student Body to show support in person."

- Motion **passed**.

**Chair Modun:** Can you give an update on the BERO draft?

- **Response:** I talked to City Councilor Broderick and he said they still need to add ways of assisting funding and the possibility of creating a new office in Burlington to help push these projects through and provide funding. He said the bill and its mission won't change much. It is set to be discussed and go into further drafts on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and has to be passed by October 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Senator York:** Do we have any clause in the resolution that if the bill changes enough we have to repass this?

- **Response:** I am fairly confident it won't change much. The main focus is reducing greenhouse gas emissions and carbon emissions which will not change.

**Senator Laychak:** Did they give you any idea about when they will know if the additional assistance funding will make it into the bill?

- **Response:** The meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup> is when they will get into that. It is likely that it will be added as it is a major concern of many of the City Councilors.

**Chair Modun:** Did he give you any update on the level of support on the City Council?

- **Response:** Currently it is in the Transportation, Energy, and Utilities Committee where two are for it and two are unsure. That is why I am proposing this resolution to show that Burlington and specifically UVM students are behind it.

**Senator Esbin:** How many UVM buildings are directly affected by this ordinance?

- **Response:** I learned this last night from the Director of Sustainability, it will be 23 buildings on campus.
- I think this ordinance is extremely important as a progressive policy to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions. UVM has a Comprehensive Sustainability Plan, but there isn't a centralized push to achieve their goal of carbon neutrality by 2030. I believe they need this outside force pushing them to follow their words with action. I hope you will vote in favor.

RESOLUTION: **Passed** by majority; Chair Modun, Chair Garcia, Senator Toomey, Senator Ranallo, and Senator Esbin against; Senator Paquette, Senator Lynch, and Chair Surak abstained

Bill Recognizing UVM Herp, sponsored by Chair Halvorson

- Herping is like birding but looking for reptiles and amphibians at night. We want to go out and look for frogs. It's going to be similar to Outing Club with a few trips each weekend.

**Senator Osei:** This might be a dumb question, how are you going to stay safe in the woods?

- **Response:** We'll bring first aid kits and be prepared. We will also only be going to places recommended by professors or other sources, not new places. We will scout it out and make sure it's ok before we go.

**BILL: Passed** unanimously, Chair Halvorson abstained

### **Emergency Business**

### **New Business**

Bill Recognizing Jewelry Club

Bill Recognizing UVM Line Dancing Club

### **Senatorial Forum**

### **Executive Reports**

#### **Speaker Connors**

- I can't believe we have Executive Reports before 8:30. That shows the importance of our Public Forum guests, they will be here next week so don't get used to this.
- Judicial met last week on Thursday, it was a short but productive meeting. I'm excited to meet again this week.
- Hope you guys are staying well during midterms season.

**Chair Jones:** Can you tell us what the secret project is now?

- **Response:** No, I'm sorry. Next week we will all hear about it, only two of the Judicial members heard about it.

### **Vice President Bednarik**

- Thank you to all who made it to Make-up Retreat.
- Today, myself and President Teferra attended the Presidential Listening Session searching for the new president. It went well and was quick, asking what challenges we see on campus and what we want out of the next president.
  - A reminder that the survey that all students can fill out is still open and very important to add your input on this search.
- We will release the Finance Chair application this week, due Saturday night. Because of the conversations we have had around the Student Activity Fee and budgeting, we want the new chair to have as much time as possible to get going before Chair Murphy leaves.

### **President Teferra**

- Happy Tuesday!
- Today I had a meeting with Kelley O'Malley and Interim President Prelock about Commencement and the proposed changes.
  - I didn't really learn much more but it was a first step to see how we can make it as equitable and fun for everyone who is graduating.
  - Many parts are set in stone but if you have any concerns or questions reach out to her, she is very nice and really cares about making Commencement as nice as possible. The power of using your voice is important for all things including this.

## **Treasurer Sorensen**

- I am looking for representatives for the SpringFest Planning Committee. It is put on by the Department of Student Life, UVM Program Board, and us.
  - We have two seats on the committee to plan events and programming, not the artist. That includes food vendors, activities, and all the other fun things that also happen at SpringFest.
  - Let me know if you are interested because they need people by next week.
  - If you are interested in being the Speaker of the Senate this is almost a pipeline, Speaker Connors did this and so did Emeritus Speaker Clark.
- Next Tuesday at 5:30pm, SGA and the Disabled Students Union are holding a Ribbon Cutting Event for the new bus benches at the bus stop on Central under the sky bridge. It would be great for all of us to be there.
- Administration met today to discuss the Student Activity Fee and the data we got for them. We should have information back from them soon. The Board of Trustees meet next weekend.

**Chair Modun:** Emeritus Speaker Clark and Emeritus Chair Elkort are on the livestream asking why you're not at dinner?

- **Response:** Tell them that I value the Student Government Association and our time here and that I will be there soon.

**Vice President Bednarik:** The Board of Trustees meeting is open for students to sit in on. It is valuable to go hear what topics are being discussed because they are very impactful.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Public Relations Committee**

- Fun Fact of the Week: There are more possible chess game variations than atoms in the universe.

### **Committee on the Environment**

- Senator Lynch held the Upcycling Event last week, I hope everyone went. She is working on another one soon.
- Senator Gottfurcht is working on the Thrift Store and crafting a business plan for that.
- Senator Arnone is talking with Emeritus Senator Wiltz about the Accessible Trails Project. He is also working on putting water fountains into buildings.

### **Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity**

- Animal of the Week: There are actually two. One is a groundhog and the other is a dog named Bailey who lives in my building.
- I had a meeting with Elliot Ruggles to discuss SVAM and ideas we have for collaboration.
  - I want to remind everyone of our commitment to SVAM and MARCH! A Celebration of Leaders in Gender Equity to promote and volunteer. If you have any ideas for us to implement, please reach out to us.
- Melissa Murray, Aurora Hurd, and Senator Theroux met about MARCH! A Celebration of Leaders in Gender Equity to talk about planning and logistics.
  - We are picking one of the speakers so if you have anyone in mind, let us know.
- Senator Petracek met with the Interfaith Center about helping with events and various issues they are running into.

## **Committee on Legislative and Community Affairs**

- Community Coalition is Friday 3-4:30pm, they are bringing in a speaker from the City on public safety. I encourage showing up online or in person.
- Senator Lee is working with Civic Engagement and the Identity Centers on Zen Dens for Election Day.
- Senator Oreck is getting involved with Troy Headrick working on a bill to limit the number of students that UVM can admit.
- Community Cleanup is November 9<sup>th</sup> at 2pm, I would love to see you all there.
- Song of the Week: Colorado by Reneé Rapp.

**Chair Jones:** Community Cleanup is so much fun and so impactful if you are able to make it.

- **Response:** There will be coffee, hot cocoa, lots of free stuff.

## **Committee on Student Action and Well-Being**

- Senator Onorato is reaching out to Elliot Ruggles about the Vector trainings. CSAW is working on creating some enforcement for that, reach out if you are interested in working with us on that.
- We are in transitional stages on many projects, so more updates in the coming weeks.
- Going forward, we will have an ongoing relationship between CSAW and Blake Reilly. We will be meeting twice a month, once with just the chair and once with the whole committee. If you are interested in coming to that meeting, let me know and please feel free to do so.
- Artist of the Week: Troye Sivan, I like his new stuff but I was originally a fan because of his Blue Neighbourhood Trilogy.



## **Club Affairs Committee**

- Congratulations to Senator Paquette on passing his resolution, that's a big achievement.
- Reach out to Senator Demeo about SGA Town Halls.
- We have been busy confirming clubs and meeting with club signers. If you hear about clubs not in good standing, send them our way.
  - We have confirmed or are in the process of confirming 19 already this session.
- I am continually meeting with Elliot Ruggles and Ana Sola on the Sexual Violence Prevention club signer training. As Senators, we are all expected to be there. It is scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup> from 6-8, we are working out the details because that overlaps with Senate meetings.

## **Academic Affairs Committee**

- On Friday, I had a meeting with A.J. Guedouar who is affiliated with Grammarly. We talked about equity concerns with access to educational materials that are paid services. We talked about a contract with Grammarly to remedy these disparities in access. I will be talking with faculty about this because it is a big change to ask for.
- We are interested in a contract with some online study tool since these resources are limited and often only provided when students are struggling. We want to be proactive instead of reactive.
- Meeting with Thomas Borchert, the Chair of the Religion Department, to talk about WiFi shortages. He will be doing a survey of CAS about that.
  - We also talked about incorporating AI into syllabuses because the guidelines are not clear and can influence how students perceive the role of AI in a course. I will have a survey soon to know how you all see it.

- Go to Community Coalition at 3pm on Friday.

**Chair Jones:** Based on my work with AI, I know there are sometimes issues with teachers using AI checkers that flag Grammarly. Make sure you are looking into that with this idea of contracts.

- **Response:** It is definitely something I brought up in my meeting. There is a lot of mistrust about how AI can be used right now and fear when people don't understand it completely.
  - Getting faculty support behind Grammarly Premium would be very helpful, and if we can't get their support it is an indication to look for another avenue to address the inequitable distribution of study resources.

**Treasurer Sorensen:** Isn't it Grammarly already free?

- **Response:** We were specifically talking about Grammarly Premium which costs \$140 per year per student.

#### **Finance Committee**

- Nothing to report.

#### **Senatorial Comments/Announcements**

**Senator Lee:** Tri Delta is hosting Delta House Pancakes on Friday from 8pm-2am. All you can eat breakfast food for \$5. I have been talking to Amy from Civic Engagement about a plan for tension and anxieties around the election. She has planned a Zen Den idea in Davis and is wondering if CSAW would be interested in getting involved. Brennans is booked for an election night viewing party.

**Senator Demeo:** On SGA Town Hall progress, I met with Lina and got some important information about precedent from prior years of SGA. Rather than making a big group chat, I created a separate channel in the Teams and I will post updates there.

**Senator Torres:** Noche is this Saturday, Alianza worked hard on this, you should come. Also, the First Gen Department has a speaker who was a doctor and a first gen student coming in on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Senator Talhouk:** Were we added to the Teams for the Town Halls or do we have to ask?

**Senator Demeo:** It should be visible for everyone as a separate channel.

**Adjournment**